



Town of Arlington, Massachusetts
730 Massachusetts Ave., Arlington, MA 02476
Phone: 781-316-3000

webmaster@town.arlington.ma.us

Minutes 02/13/2013

ARLINGTON TREE COMMITTEE

Meeting of Arlington Tree Committee

Wednesday, February 13th at 7:30 pm

Location: Selectmen's Hearing Room

Attendees: Sally Naish, Patrice Robertie, Susan Stamps, Clarissa Rowe, Brian Murray, Eliza Burden, Mary Ellen Aronow, Elizabeth Pilcher

Agenda

(Minutes: Liz Pilcher)

1. Approval of January Meeting Minutes 5 min
Minutes reviewed and approved

2. Committee Membership 10 min
 - Co-Chair: Nominee(s) and Term: Mary Ellen Aronow has agreed to be co-chair. Sally Naish requested that Mary Ellen begin serving as co-chair now. In June, when Sally Naish steps down, Mary Ellen Aronow will become chair, and the committee will elect another co-chair. Sally recommended a two-year term.

ACTION: The committee will decide on the length of the term.

- Resignation of Greg Watt. Sally received an email from Greg that he plans to resign.

ACTION: Sally will talk with Greg about formalizing his resignation.

3. Strategic Plan Update - LP 10 min
Liz Pilcher researched strategic plans and reported on the strategic plan of the City of Galveston tree committee. The magnitude of that plan is greater than we need, but it contains elements we can use to frame a plan for Arlington. When completed the committee will submit the plan for inclusion in the Town's master plan.

ACTION: Liz will take a first pass at adapting the Galveston plan to our needs and then will contact the subcommittee members to begin work on the plan.

ACTION: Eliza Burden will write a paragraph for the Town's annual report, which will include the number of trees lost.

4. PollDaddy Survey Update - PR 10 min
Patrice Robertie reported on the response to the tree survey, a link to which was posted on the arlingtontrees.org web site. Forty-five people had responded to date. Patrice reported on some of the suggestions made by respondents and that one hundred percent of the respondents said they would be willing to have public trees on their private property.

ACTION: Patrice will continue to monitor the site for survey responses.

Patrice has also been building a relationship with the editor of the Advocate to increase interest in publishing articles about trees. Clarissa Rowe suggested that Richard Duffy, local historian, may have information about

specific trees in Arlington, about which an article can be developed that will likely interest the Advocate.

ACTION: Mary Ellen will ask Richard if he is interested in preparing an article for the Advocate.

5. Discount Tree Program and Spring Tree Planting 20 min

· Subcommittee update: Sally and Mary Ellen met with Mike Rademacher (Director of DPW) to discuss the following issues:

o Tracking tree planting, maintenance, and loss. Mike agreed to make a list available to the ATC of trees lost and requested. The DPW currently has a year's-worth of maintenance backlog. However, Mike said the staff can make a list of locations of lost trees.

ACTION: Clarissa Rowe will talk with Jean Smith at the DPW about a possible new method to help with efficient tracking of lost trees and maintenance activities.

Clarissa provided information on the City of Cambridge tree inventory/database.

ACTION: Liz will look into the software and definitions that Cambridge and Mass DOT use.

o Town tree planting budget. There are no funds left in the DPW budget to buy and plant trees. The DPW will use the approximately \$7,000 in the Trees Please fund to plant about 100 trees this Spring. The DPW is seeking Town approval for a budget of \$40,000 x 2 years specifically for hiring a contractor to plant additional trees this year (Fall) and next year. At \$250 per tree, an additional 160 trees can be planted each year.

o Tree requests. There are currently about 70 requests for trees. DPW is planning to plant trees to meet these requests in part to replace lost trees.

o How the Tree Committee can help.

Mike would prefer all the planting to be done by the Town. He also okayed the planting of trees by the Cub Scouts with DPW support. The DPW may use the tree committee to reach out to homeowners about their responsibility when a new tree is planted by their home (watering, watching).

o Fundraising. The committee discussed whether we should continue fundraising through the Trees Please fund if the DPW will be most likely acquiring Town money for the next two years, which will specifically be held to plant about 350 trees over two years. Eliza expressed the need for understanding the plan for spending the money. (Our program for these issues can be included in the strategic plan.)

o Publicity encouraging planting by homeowners and civic groups. Patrice suggested another way to get more trees in the ground would be to provide people with a coupon allowing them to get the trees themselves. Publicity efforts with tree planting by civic groups in the prior years, coordinated by the DPW, was discussed with Mike Rademacher. Mike suggested that having the Cub Scouts plant five trees made sense and was good for publicity and general education. Mike agreed to have the DPW dig the holes prior. Mary Ellen offered to be the Cub Scout liaison again this year. A tree-demo event was not discussed.

o Unresolved issues. The planting of Town-purchased trees on private property.

ACTION: We can begin vetting appropriate locations for trees. Mike recommended that we invest our energies in community education, that we help to set the right expectations so that people understand the Town's role and the homeowner's role, that we help people understand why a given species of tree was chosen, and that we educate people not to cut down trees on their property. Sally will circulate her notes from the meeting with Mike.

ACTION: Eliza mentioned that a Google doc has been set up. She will circulate the link, so that we can all begin to enter information about the locations where trees are needed.

· Response to Letter to Editor. Mike Rademacher specifically requested that we not generate more requests for trees.

· Suggestions for small trees. Mike Rademacher indicated that the tree recommendations provided by Mass DOT are what the Town follows.

6. Off-berm planting Update - SS 10 min

Susan Stamps has worked with Juliana Rice and incorporated her suggested changes. Susan reviewed the changes and Clarissa requested that we do not use the term "off-berm", which is confusing. We discussed various terms to describe the planting of publicly-funded trees on private property within 20 ft of the public way, which includes the sidewalks.

7. EcoFest - Saturday, March 23rd 10 min

· Subcommittee update

We discussed the need to modify the post card to remove reference to making tree requests. The subcommittee will review the card and other possible handouts.

8. Trees Report (Tree-related information & updates) 5 min
None

9. Other Business 5 min

a. MPAC meeting update

Post-meeting note: The MPAC had its first "organizing " meeting in early December; draft minutes were prepared for that meeting. It was expected that the group would next meet when the Master Plan consultant(s) were on board; that was anticipated to be in late January, 2013. January and February meetings were cancelled as the contract with the consultant was not finalized. The next "proposed " meeting is scheduled for March 5.

b. Outreach suggestions - LP

Liz researched web sites of various "friends of" groups and on-line media to use their email contact lists in the event that Patrice wants to do email marketing. Liz will send the links to Patrice.

Next meeting: Wednesday, March 13th, 2013 at 7:30 pm at the 2nd floor conference room of the Town Hall Annex. (Entering from the Town Hall parking lot, use the last door on the right.)